

**For Immediate Release**

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## **ACHAEMENID RELIEF LEADS CHRISTIE'S LONDON AUCTION OF ANTIQUITIES IN OCTOBER 2007**



An Achaemenid stone relief, first half of 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, Persepolis

9.3/8 x 12.1/4 in (23.8 x 31.1 cm)

Estimate: £500,000-800,000

**King Street** – Christie's announce the auction of *Antiquities* on 25 October at King Street, which will offer a strong selection of ancient art, jewellery and sculpture, particularly in the Near Eastern and Classical sections. The highlight of the sale is *The Berend Achaemenid Relief* which depicts the profile head of a Persian guard in profile and dates to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC (£500,000-£800,000). The relief is similar in style to other sculptures from Persepolis, the city founded by Darius I, 'King of Kings', in 515 BC. The city flourished at the heart of the Achaemenid Empire until 333 BC when Alexander the Great and his Macedonian troops defeated the Persians at the Battle of Issus. The relief comes from the Berend private collection, having formerly been in the possession of the philanthropist Hagop Kevorkian (1872-1962). It was sold as property from the Hagop Kevorkian Fund at an auction in New York on 4 May 1974, and was acquired by the present owner at a subsequent auction in New York on 10 October 1974.

From a similar period and complementing the relief is an Achaemenid silver-gilt bowl decorated with palmettes (£30,000-£35,000) and a powerful pre-Achaemenid silver and gold upper part of a bearded male figure (£30,000-£35,000). There is a large private collection of mainly Luristan bronzes, including elaborate 2<sup>nd</sup>-early 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC axeheads, ranging in estimate from £1000 upwards.

In the Classical section is the Swiss *van Berchem Collection of Greek Antiquities* which was formed in the 1960s, with highlights included in an exhibition of *Art in Swiss Private Collections* at the Musee Rath, Geneva, in 1975. The antiquities include a fine *circa* 560 BC Attic black figure amphora decorated with a lively scene on each side of a Greek hoplite or warrior riding with his groom-attendant (estimate

£30,000-£40,000). The warrior's shield is emblazoned with a leaping hare, and on the other side of the amphora, an ox-head. The warrior wears a Corinthian style helmet and greaves, while his spear-bearing attendant wears a peaked hat, with a bird following in flight behind. The amphora is in exceptionally good condition and was acquired at auction in Basel in 1963. The other antiquities from the Collection include a selection of Greek and South Italian vases.

In the Egyptian section are two small but interesting private collections, one of bronzes and shabtis belonging to Dr J. J. Acworth (1853-1927), who travelled to Egypt in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and was a benefactor of The British Museum. The other collection of Egyptian and Classical antiquities comes from Dr Rudolf Schmidt (1900-1970), a Swiss benefactor of the Rietberg Museum, Zurich, and the University of Fribourg. A number of 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Century AD Coptic textiles complete this section, including an exceptionally large, 76 x 55 in. (193 x 140 cm) hanging decorated with urns of fruit and flowers which was originally with the French dealer, Altounian, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and now comes from a Princely collection (£50,000-£80,000). Other Coptic antiquities include a rare pair of trousers and leather shoes.

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**Images available on request**  
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### **Notes to editors:**

#### **Auction**

Antiquities, 25 October, 11 am and 2pm

#### **Viewing**

Tuesday 23 October      6pm to 8pm  
Wednesday 24 October   9am to 4.30pm  
Thursday 25 October     9am to 10.30am

#### **About Christie's**

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